

## **From The Pastor's Study**

### **Who Is Right**

Are you confused yet? The WHO and CDC came up with suggestions as to how we should deal with COVID19, those recommendations have turned into Executive Orders. I don't intend to get into whether the information for those orders were late. I'm not going to discuss what would have happened if accurate information had been received early on. I also will not be talking about all of the conspiracy theories, I will allow the "experts" to unshuffle that deck and come to some level of truth.

What I do want to explore, at least, what is a Christian's responsibility to all of this; what actions should we have made, and what we should do now. You know when Jesus was asked whether Jews should pay taxes to Romans he answered "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's". In short He said there is a separation between government and the Jewish community and there are rules in both camps. When it comes to Americans and particularly American Christians there are more ideologies than just the two.

Anyone who knows me is well aware I am an American Patriot and a Christian. There are two documents I lean on heavily: the Bible and the Constitution of the United State of America and the Amendments there of. I am certain I am not alone in this and like many of you the two present a dilemma. Then there is the third part of me that is naturally rebellious, that part that is resistant when it comes to authority. Yet there is another part of me, that part that served twenty-two years of Naval service when I took and obeyed orders and directives, and I know I am not alone in this as well. So, I want to take a few minutes and tear this down.

I first mentioned the Bible, what is my responsibility as a Christian and a pastor? As a Christian I am called to care for, to love my fellow man whether I like them or not. When Jesus expressed the greatest commandment He placed the hardest of commandments. He didn't divide people into groups and say "Love this group but it is okay not to love that group". We are called to love everyone, that means that as Christians we have the responsibility of considering how our actions affect those in our community. Now consider what actions, with this information, we should take.

As a Pastor I look at two parts of me, Christian and pastor. I have the same responsibility as every other Christian but I have responsibility as a pastor to the

congregation I serve. There are a few churches that have been reported holding services as if there was nothing wrong. One pastor stated that true believers are safe but those who fear coming to church should stay home. Another stated that closing churches is a violation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, I will address this later. I, and the session of GPC are responsible to do what is in the best interest of the congregation. The pastor and session made the decision to comply with the directives of the President of the United States. Were we right or wrong.

I am a Patriot, more specifically an American Patriot, I have served my country in a very unpopular war and I did with pride. I stand for the banner that has flown in war and peace over all her people and I am proud of the documents which guide this country in freedom and I will protect all they stand for to my last breath. So I clearly understand when people rise up in protest of directives that go against our Constitution, which force us into self-confinement and limits our freedom. And I understand the anger when our 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment right to peaceful protest, where they use the very directive that is being protested to prevent the gatherings.

I wish that my fellow man could be trusted to observe the recommendations set down by the CDC without turning those recommendations into laws. Unfortunately I seriously doubt that many would which would probably mean more cases of COVID-19 and many more deaths. I also recognize the suffering of those who are unemployed as a result of the order that cost them income. It's a very hard decision but I personally feel that the good of the masses is being looked out for. It is a bitter pill to swallow, I dislike it myself, I would much rather be free to open the sanctuary of my church and lead worship from the pulpit instead of making a video from my home office but I must consider the wellbeing of my family and the families of those who would join us for worship.

I am sorry for those suffering from the loss of income, for those confined in their homes and feel cabin fever pushing them toward the edge of sanity. I am heartbroken for those who are living on our streets, there are no sinks to wash in and no soap. I hurt for those many workers who are placing their health and the wellbeing of their families while they go on with their jobs. I am heartbroken for the parents who have the responsibility of holding school and spending day and night with children whose energy is exploding. I stand in respect for those in military service who have no choice but to leave family to fulfill their duties and for those families struggle alone.

I guess in the end, I don't have the answer. I turn to God in prayer and seek guidance from the one who created me. I pray for protection knowing I am no more deserving of it than any person on earth. I beg Him for the answer to all of this and to bring it to an end. I ask Him when He is going to do something and His response..."I did, I created you." Meaning He created humankind to resolve this issue.

For me, I will continue to abide by the requirements to the degree that I can, in my own way and to the extent I feel I should. I don't blindly obey the directives set down; I look at the information, I pray, and I decide what is right for me and my family and do what I feel is right for the church. I seek God's guidance and respond as best I can, we all have that decision to make.